



Exploring Norwegian Emigration Records: Finding Place of Origin

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This class is designed to teach family history researchers how to find emigrant from Norway.

Objectives:

Patrons will be able to find emigrants:

- in early emigration records-pre-1867
- in organized emigration records-post 1867

Background:

Most of the Norwegian people for whom we can find records are those people who left Norway from 1825-1920. An estimated 900,000 people left Norway during this period and most of them immigrated to the United States and Canada. The emigrants from Norway who left before 1825 generally travelled to other countries and ports in Europe and left from there. You need to be familiar with the research sources available in the areas where your ancestors lived in the U.S. as well as Norwegian sources you can use to trace your ancestors to Norway.

Getting started: Find a place-name where your ancestor lived.

In order to trace your Norwegian ancestors in Norway, you need to have the name of the place where they lived, were born, or were married. To find this information, you need an understanding of what records are available in the United States and Norway. As you search the sources discussed below, have these questions in mind:

- Was your ancestor in the U.S. by 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930?
- Where did your immigrant ancestor reside in the United States?

- When did your ancestor emigrate?
- Did your ancestor emigrate alone or with someone?
- Did your ancestor emigrate as a child or as an adult?
- Was your ancestor married when he or she emigrated?

Search Norwegian-American records:

Some of the following sources may have information about your ancestor. Search:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, online at <http://www.elca.org>
- Family History Library Catalog for Norwegian-American churches.
- Lutheran Church directories at the Family History Library (FHL).
- Naturalization records.
- The Andrew Ansel Rowberg Collection at the (FHL) on microfiche.

Norwegian-American Societies such as:

- Norwegian American Genealogical Center (NAGC) at <http://nagcnl.org>
- Sons of Norway at <http://www.sofn.com>

Universities and colleges:

- These colleges (libraries) may have information about your ancestors.

Augustana College (Sioux Falls, SD), Concordia College (Morehead, NM), Luther College, Preus Library (Decorah, IA), Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma, WA), and St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN), have a wealth of information about immigrants from Norway.

Bygdelag

Bygdelag are organizations comprised of descendant who emigrated from specific localities in Norway to North America. See Bygdelagenes Fellesraad at www.fellesraad.com

Nordmændene i Amerika, deres historie og Rekord (The Norwegians in America, their history and Record). This volume is available at the Family History Library (FHL) 973 F2u Pt. 1 and 2.

SEARCH NORWEGIAN RECORDS

Gazetteers

If you know the name of the farm where your ancestor came from, you may want to search Norwegian gazetteers. The 1972 Postal Guide for Norway is online at:

- <http://da3.arkivverket.no/cgi-win/WebBok.exe?slag=lesbok&bokid=nsf>
- Norske Gaardnavne (Norwegian farm names) by O. Rygh available online at: http://www.dokpro.uio.no/rygh_ng/rygh_form.html
- Postal Guide (1901) available at (FHL) 948.1 e8ns 1901 pt. 1 and 2.

When you have searched the American sources and the Norwegian-American sources, you should now have a place-name in Norway. You can then continue your search using the resources identified below.

Emigration Records in Norway

If you still do not have a place-name and you only have a year of immigration from a U.S. census, you will want to search the emigration records for each port in Norway for that year.

Look for your ancestor's name in the emigration record by searching these helpful websites.

- Digitalarkivet (Digital Archives of Norway) <https://digitalarkivet.no/en/> Search the year that he or she left Norway.
- Norway-Heritage <http://www.norwayheritage.com/ships/index.asp>

The online emigration records for Norway are indexed and are in print that is easy to read.

Things You Need To Know About Emigration Records

- Emigration records from Norway will list a person's last place of residence and usually the age of each person emigrating. If a whole family emigrated together, it will list relationships.
- If your ancestor left Norway prior to the organized emigration (starts around 1867), you may want to search the Family History Library (FHL) Catalog for early

emigration records.

- One great set of books to search for early Norwegian immigrants is **Norwegian Immigrants to The United States: A Biographical Directory, 1825-1850** by Gerhard B. Naeseth. Available at the (FHL) 973 D3nn vols. 1-5.

LDS SOURCES

- Emigration from the Scandinavian Mission, 1853-1886. FHL 948 W2 2 vols.
- Scandinavian LDS Mission Index (names extracted from LDS mission records). Available on microfiche by last name, then first name. Fiche nol. 6060482 then part no. 1-344.
- Passport to Paradise: The Copenhagen "Mormon" Passenger Lists by Shauna C. Anderson, Ruth Ellen Maness, and Susan Easton Black. Available at the FHL 973 W3, 2 vols.
- Clash of Cultures: the Norwegian experience with Mormonism, 1842-1920 by Gerald Myron Haslam. FHL 948.1 F2h 1984. List of early members Appendix I pgs. 123-141.

Want to learn more see: FamilySearch wiki for Norway

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Norway_Genealogy

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